**Combination of MI, Ubd/DI, and FIAE Reflections**

**Chapters 6, 7 (UbD/DI) Chapters 5, 6 (MI)**

The key for all teachers, and the focus of Chapters 5 and 6 of *Multiple Intelligences*, is to “translate the material to be taught from one intelligence to another (64).” To do this a teacher must plan out how one concept can be transformed multiple times for the different students in their class. There are many ways, some traditional and some innovative, in awaking the areas of the brain that have been left dormant for so long. In Chapter 5 Thomas Armstrong lists many techniques and activities teachers can use to translate material from one intelligence to another. Chapter 6 expands on some of these to give the reader more specific examples.

Chapter 6 of *Understanding by Design* by Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe focuses on how a teacher can be responsive to their students in a differentiated classroom. Just like a teacher must be responsive to children’s different learning styles, teachers must also know when to differentiate. Chapter 7 of UbD concerns how to uncover the content. It has become too true that school curriculum has become a mile wide but only an inch thick. This does not lead much opportunity for student contemplation and discussion, but rather just the memorizing facts. To get into the material more the chapter suggests implementing the WHERETO framework. This process is set in the order of What, Why, Hook, Equip, Experiences, Rethink, Evaluation, Tailor, and Organize.

The challenge for me as a teacher is to find creative ways to engage all eight intelligences in my classroom. The Social Studies naturally appeals a lot to linguistic learners due to the material. I have been wondering a lot lately how historical information could be presented to a logical-mathematical, musical, or naturalist person. Some ideas presented in the book that I really like are activities such as Pictionary (Spatial), charades (Bodily-Kinesthetic), and peer sharing (Interpersonal). For my three challenge areas I like nature walks (Naturalist), mood music (musical), and Socratic questioning (logical-mathematical). Socratic questioning is something I am already familiar with because it the philosophy of Supplemental Instruction and I use it often in my Statistics class.

One core belief about curriculum that I totally agree with is that “students need opportunities to learn the ‘basics’ and opportunities to apply them in meaningful ways (85).” This quote from *Understanding by Design* uses an analogy of a coach and players to drive home the point. Too many “sideline drills” and not enough playing the “real game” is a strategy made for failure. That is why I think a project-based unit is a great idea. It limits the amount of worksheet-type learning and makes students apply their knowledge to real life applications. This in turn makes the class more engaging and allows room to appeal to the different intelligences. Along with using the WHERETO model I know I can become a successful teacher and truly engage my students.

**Chapters 7, 9, 13, 14 MI**

Chapters 7, 9, 13, and 14 of *Multiple Intelligences* largely discuss how MI can be ideally used in a classroom, and how MI schools should look. In Chapter 7, Thomas Armstrong stresses again that all eight intelligences should have a place in any given classroom. He focused more specifically on how a classroom can be set up to help different students to learn. From having an aquarium (naturalist) to having tables set up in an inviting way (spatial), there is a lot that goes into creating an inviting and confortable learning area. This way of looking at a classroom is called the environmental model, or an ecological model.

Chapter 9 concerns what Howard Gardner considers the ideal MI school. The ideal MI would be very different from what our schools look like today. We are too reliant on logical-mathematical and linguistic learning, even though the other six intelligences can easily be used in all classes. Gardner suggests that schools should be more like children’s museums or the old apprenticeship model. I think this is a great idea. How natural is forcing a child to fill out a worksheet or fill in the blanks? When do adults ever have to do half of the things we make our students do? I love the idea of moving towards a Project Based curriculum where students are able to *create* not just memorize and repeat.

To highlight what an MI school looks like, Armstrong discussed the Key Learning Community in Indianapolis, Indiana. This school does many things differently than the public schools we have in place today, like using school-wide themes and providing students access to a “flow room.” To me, the four chapters can be summed up in one quote: multiple intelligence theory is all about “unleashing children’s potentials in all intelligences (Armstrong, 128).” To do that I think we need a change in educational culture here in America, something I think the book eludes to multiple times. I agree that we should let students expand upon all their intelligences. However, there are dangers to an MI school. If we pigeon hole a child early into only one intelligence we would be messing with the very fabric of our society. Like the chapter says, it could lead to forcing children into “a small niche that would serve a narrowly segmented society (Armstrong, 129).” That is why we must build MI schools effectively and rely on positive teachers to guide the future leaders of our world.

Chapter 13 talks about other applications of MI Theory, specifically with computer technology, cultural diversity, and career counseling. Armstrong provides his readers with many Web 2.0 tools in this chapter, all of which can be used for different intelligences. He then goes on to discuss how all cultures have the eight intelligences. But, they are valued differently and are taught for different reasons and in different ways. Our modern culture is the only culture that requires students to remember random numbers for tests. Rather, other cultures pass stories and myths verbally which are often memorized.

The last chapter discusses the possibility of existential intelligence.

I also feel that existential intelligence activities in the classroom could lead to complications. I found the section on existential intelligence concerning history very fascinating. Ideals, beliefs, religion, they are what drive everyone. So yes, they do have a place to be discussed in a history class and I plan to have thoughtful and safe discussion on these issues in my classroom. I was not aware at the time that the existential intelligence covered discussions like this. I personally love debating philosophical questions about everything and to anyone who will talk to me. I’ve learned some people have no care to be philosophical or think about “what ifs.” I belief it is a great thing to discuss the problems of our world and talk about how our world works. Although this sounds perfect for a Social Science, I know this can lead to problems. If I were to work in these discussions into my classroom I must be very mindful of the possibilities that could arise. Angry parents, student fights, religious battles, just to name a few off the top of my head. Still though, debate is essential to our way of life, so I will be continuing to think of ways in which debate and peace can live harmoniously together in my classroom someday.

**Chapter 8 UbD/DI and Chapters 8, 11, 12 MI and Article**

Chapter Eight of *Understanding by Design* is about how to strike the balance between evaluator of student work and being a supportive advisor. To be balanced teachers must use valid assessments. Valid assessments determine what we intend them to do and not any other outside factors. Grades should not be based off of other students’ grade such as a grading curve, and not everything should be included in grades. I personally believe that homework should either be a very insignificant part of the final grade or nothing at all. Participation will be a big part in my class and attempts at homework will fall under this category. Teacher that graded homework was something I did not like about high school and I think it is unfair to give a grade to something that is supposed to be practice. The book suggests that class participation be kept separate from the overall class grade, which I disagree with. I think participation shows a student who is active in their learning and can help boost a students’ grade that tries hard but still has trouble with the material.

Another role of the teacher is that of classroom manager. There are many bad ways to try and get a hold of students’ attention. Chapter 8 of *Multiple Intelligences* suggests only as fraction of the types of “hooks” a teacher can do that appeal to different intelligences. I think that having an effective hook to start class would be a great way to prepare my future students to learn. I feel like that if I do the hooks effectively for the first month or so then students would just come to school expecting to learn and I may end up not needing a hook every class. Appealing to multiple intelligences can also help managing behaviors and communicating class rules.

Multiple Intelligence theory is very useful in helping special needs students succeed in the classroom. MI theory can help highlight what a student *can* do instead of what they *can’t* do. They can be used in IEPs, which would help teachers understand where the strengths of their special needs students are. This would make inclusion classrooms that much more fluid and help change the culture of America. MI theory can even help in retaining information. A teacher that can identify how their students’ memory works can appeal to that child’s intelligence. Too often do we only try to memorize things in a linguistically or logically. MI theory tells us *how* kids learn, which is a very powerful tool.

**Chapters 7, 8, 9,10 FIAE**

To fully posses a classroom that utilizes differentiated instruction a teacher must understand how to implement and interpret grades. As teachers we should always have assessments in mind when we plan our lessons. Ultimately we teachers are assessors, and it is our job to get students to a point where they are able to show what they have learned through authentic assessments. That is why grading is such a tricky practice. There is a natural subjective nature to attaching a single letter or number to a whole piece of work. As Rick Wormeli states, “We can do better” (Wormeli, 90). But we cannot abolish grades completely, at least most teachers do not agree with this idea (Wormeli, 94). I also agree that grades are justified and can give a sense of level of understanding and provide feedback. I feel like I do not know how to function in a school if there were no grades. I have been a product of the system for too long to throw grading out of the window, although I wish I could.

Chapter 8 of *Fair Isn’t Always Equal* attempts to establish why we grade. Six reasons were given: to document student and teacher progress, to provide feedback to the student and family, to inform instructional decisions, to motivate, to punish, and to sort students. The first three are the ones that Wormeli tried to emphasize. The last three diminish the meaning of grades and only serve to distance students from wanting to pursue learning. As a student I do not think I ever ran across a teacher who deliberately tried to punish a student through grading, but there were teachers who tried to motivate us. This of course is extrinsic motivation, which is much less effective than intrinsic motivation. Wormeli also suggests that teachers should not grade participation. I do not agree with this because I feel participation is important. To me, grades do not have to be all about the content. Other factors should be included in the final grade that people use in the real world.

One policy I want as a teacher is that there will be no penalty for revisions of work. If a student hands an assignment in to me on time they can re-do that assignment how many times they want until a week before school ends. Also, I hated when teachers graded my homework. I will not do that as a teacher. Among the other eight tips provided by Wormeli in Chapter 9 I agree with most of them. But the two mentioned earlier I am most passionate about. Allowing re-dos is expanded upon more in Chapter 10. Reading about it more makes even more sense. I think students would appreciate this policy and would help the students who learn at different paces.

**FIAE 11, 12, 13, 14**

There are two sides of teaching. On one side we are the educators and motivators. We encourage students to do their best, befriend them, and teach them valuable lessons. On the other side we are their evaluators and authority figures. On this side we almost have to act with the mind of a businessman. These four chapters lean more towards how teachers should conduct the business aspect of their profession. Chapter 11 is about six different glaring questions teachers often have that are usually controversial. One that stood out for me is whether or not to put in a zero for a students’ incomplete work. Wormeli suggests that educators put in a 60 for incomplete work and reasons that is fair because a zero is too much of a negative. Now, maybe I’m just old school, but a zero is way more motivating in getting students to finish work than a 60. The message behind his book is that it is not being easy on the student but rather just fair. But, I just think giving a student a 60 is too soft and my teachers never did that for me. Another business topic that a teacher needs to consider is what kind of grading scale to implement in their classroom, which is discussed in Chapter 12. Personally, I like how a 100-point scale sounds. It is not that I dislike classes that use a 4.0 scale or any other sort of scale. I just think a 100-point scale is more straightforward and makes it easier to understand one’s grade.

The last two chapters concern how a teacher can format their grade books and report cards in a differentiated classroom. When I first started learning the teaching profession I was so naïve to how much time must be spent considering things such as these. As a student I never took notice of how the teacher was structuring their grade book or how they created report cards. I do like the idea of grading both personal progress and achievement against standards. I feel like students and teachers always want to know *why* they or their child got the grade they did. I want my report cards and grade book to be as straightforward and simple as possible. I think it would be valuable to include a portion of the report card that allowed for personal comments about the individual student. They used to always do this up through middle school and then report cards become more vague and less user friendly in high school. I want to let the teachers and students know that I will be on their side, and I think people would appreciate seeing a report card that showed some effort in it.